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Becky Denney <dardenne@swbell.net> on 10/05/2001 02:28:48 PM

To: YMP_SR@YMP.gov

cc:

Subject: Yucca Mt Site Characterization Office (M/S #025)

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Carol Hanlon
US Department of Energy
Yucca Mountain Site Characterization Office
(M/S #025)
PO Box 30307
North Las Vegas, NV 89036-0307

Dear Ms. Hanlon:

Since the tragedy on September 11, 2001 it has become more important for us to examine all possible problems with the disposal of nuclear waste. Dangers, which were shrugged off previously, must be considered and prevented. High level nuclear waste is a danger to all of us if we can't control it. I think Americans now believe that terrorists using nuclear waste to cause injury or disruption of infrastructure services in our modern society is a serious danger. In September the International Atomic Energy Agency said that over the past 12 months, there were 13 known interceptions of trafficked nuclear material worldwide.

While little of the news about the events on Sept 11, 2001 centered on irresponsibility on the part of the FBI, the CIA, or other government agencies, the public will be more critical in the future if large numbers of citizens are put at risk. Yet, as members of a Democratic country we are responsible for decisions made about nuclear waste and nuclear use. So our input is a critical element in *viewing the problem* not just a response to one step of an inflexible government plan.

We must insure that all high level radioactive material is guarded and that we produce no more of it. The less we have the less we will have to guard, so we must quit producing it. *The primary conclusion must be that there is no good way to dispose of and safeguard nuclear waste.* Yucca Mountain is not geologically suitable for storing nuclear waste. It is in an area prone to earthquakes. There may be some risk of volcanoes. I believe the problems of storing nuclear waste at Yucca Mountain are not as simple as finding the right storage container or finding the right distance between storage containers.

The possibility of accidents, thefts, or planned terrorist assaults increases as the material is shipped through the

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states. There is no excuse for shipping such dangerous substances through populated cities by railroad or highway as will be required from the 76 reactors east of the Mississippi River. The citizens must pay the bill in health, environmental damage, and taxes for accidents and widespread contamination. In terms of health and danger for local citizens to allow such shipments is not an act of courage or patriotism. Neither can we afford the tax burden of cleanups nor the damage to the environment if nuclear fuel rods overheat and produce a steam explosion that releases lethal radioactivity.

There are examples of freight trains derailing with hazardous chemicals such as the one on July 18, a May 31 derailment where coal cars were dumped near homes in Webster Groves, MO, and a runaway train traveling for 70 miles in Ohio before stopping. Much of our lives is spent to build healthy communities and promote good schools but this is wasted effort if one of those shipments derails in Missouri. This is a danger that is close to my home in Kirkwood day after day for the next 25 or 30 years if those shipments travel by rail. And if they travel by truck the danger to our infrastructure or our water supply may be greater.

I am against the use of Yucca Mountain as a permanent repository for nuclear waste. I am against shipments of nuclear waste across the country. I am for guarding the nuclear waste that we do have. I am for an on-going program to study containers for storing the nuclear waste at their present sites.

Sincerely,
Becky Denney
625 Angenette Ave
Kirkwood, MO 63122
314-821-5524